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SUBJECT: UK GOALS FOR SEPTEMBER INFORMAL EU FOREIGN  
MINISTERS MEETING (GYMNICH)

REF: SECSTATE 123576

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Maura Connelly for reasons  
1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary. According to the Foreign Office, the key agenda items at the September Gymnich meeting are Kosovo, the Inter-Governmental Conference on EU Reform, the Middle East, and a review of EU strategic partnerships with a focus on Russia. As is practice at informal Gymnich meetings, the UK does not expect any formal conclusions or new policy statements to come out of the meeting. Foreign Secretary Miliband wants to impress on other EU Ministers the need to prepare now for unified EU action on Kosovo, if no agreement is reached by the December 10 deadline. He wants to use the discussion on Russia to build consensus on the message for the next EU-Russia Summit. Miliband will also stress that the recent agreement on an Iran-IAEA workplan is not sufficient to meet Iran's obligations under UNSC resolutions. The British are encouraged by French interest in having the EU take on a larger assistance role in Iraq. Following meetings held in Paris last month, the Foreign Office is also pleased with the French commitment to move forward on a third UNSC resolution sanctioning Iran. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff discussed ref points with Martin Sherman, head of the Foreign Office's EU Common Foreign and Security Policy Group. Sherman, who will attend the Gymnich with the Foreign Secretary, said that the agenda for the meeting will focus on

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Kosovo, the status of the Intergovernmental Conference on the EU Reform Treaty, a review of the EU's various strategic partnerships with a special focus on Russia, and discussion of the Middle East, which will include Iran and Iraq at the request of the French. Sherman provided additional comments on UK goals for the meeting as summarized below.

13. (C) Kosovo: EU Troika Representative Ischinger will brief the Foreign Ministers. According to Sherman, Ischinger's September 5 briefing to EU missions in Brussels struck the right balance of sending the message that the current Troika process is a serious one to which the EU is committed, while making clear EU states need to be focusing now on how to take unified action, if no agreement is reached by the December 10 deadline. The UK view is that there has been a "toughening up" among EU members on the Kosovo issue and even those Members who have been most cautious about bringing negotiations to an end understand the EU needs to be prepared to take action this December. London is especially pleased with new French energy and cooperation on the issue, Sherman said.

14. (C) Russia: The UK wants a frank discussion on EU-Russian relations that will lay the groundwork for the

right message at the next EU-Russia Summit: the EU wants to engage with Moscow, but will be firm in defending EU values and interests in its relations with Russia. London is concerned at the lack of consensus within the EU on an approach to Russia. How to deal with Russia provokes the "broadest range of positions" among EU members on any issue, Sherman noted, from those members who want to give Russia "special treatment" and overlook its internal and external behavior, to those members who want minimum engagement. This divide is a "worry to us," Sherman said. The British understand the Gymnich discussion on Russia will not be pitched at operational issues, such as the CFE Treaty. Sherman said that the UK shares the U.S. view on the need to take a strong line on holding free and fair elections and pressing Moscow to allow domestic and international observers, but he did not expect any concrete actions in this regard to come out of the meeting.

15. (C) Middle East: Sherman did not expect anything new during the discussion on the Middle East peace process. Between scheduled Quartet meetings, Quartet Envoy Tony Blair's visit to the region, and the meetings scheduled on the UNGA margins, there is "enough of a way forward" that there is not pressure within the EU to take new action or launch new policy initiatives. The focus will remain on how does the EU support capacity-building efforts in the occupied territories within existing frameworks.

16. (C) Iran: London will use the meeting to reaffirm the two-track policy, make clear that the recent Iran-IAEA workplan, though "a step forward," did not meet the requirements of the existing UNSC resolutions, and explain the need for a third UNSC resolution. Sherman said the Foreign Office was pleased with discussions held in Paris last week on the next steps on Iran and that France is ready to move forward on a third resolution. When poloff pressed

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further on French commitment to a third resolution, Sherman said that "there is no doubt" among the Iran specialists at FCO on the French readiness to move forward.

17. (c) Iraq: According to Sherman, French Foreign Minister Kouchner put Iraq on the Gymnich agenda, following his recent visit. The UK is pleased at new French interest in having the EU join with the UN in taking on a larger role in providing development and humanitarian assistance in Iraq. There is still a long way to go to move the EU, Sherman said, but Kouchner's more constructive approach on Iraq will "change the internal dynamic in the EU" over coming months.

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